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THE THIRTY-SECOND
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

•
MILBANK MEMORIAL FUND

1955

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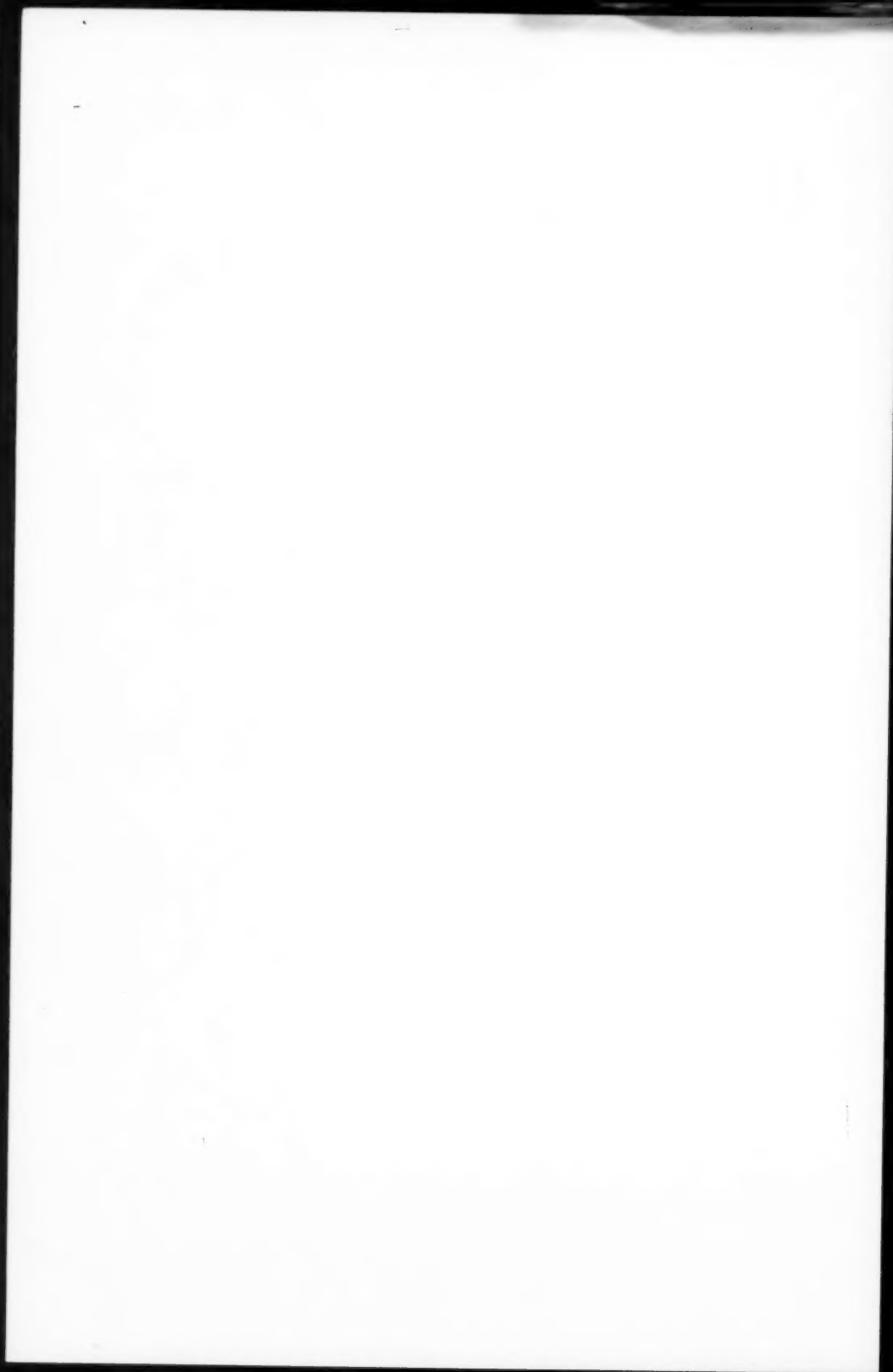
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PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-SECOND
ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

DECEMBER 1, 1955

SPEAKERS

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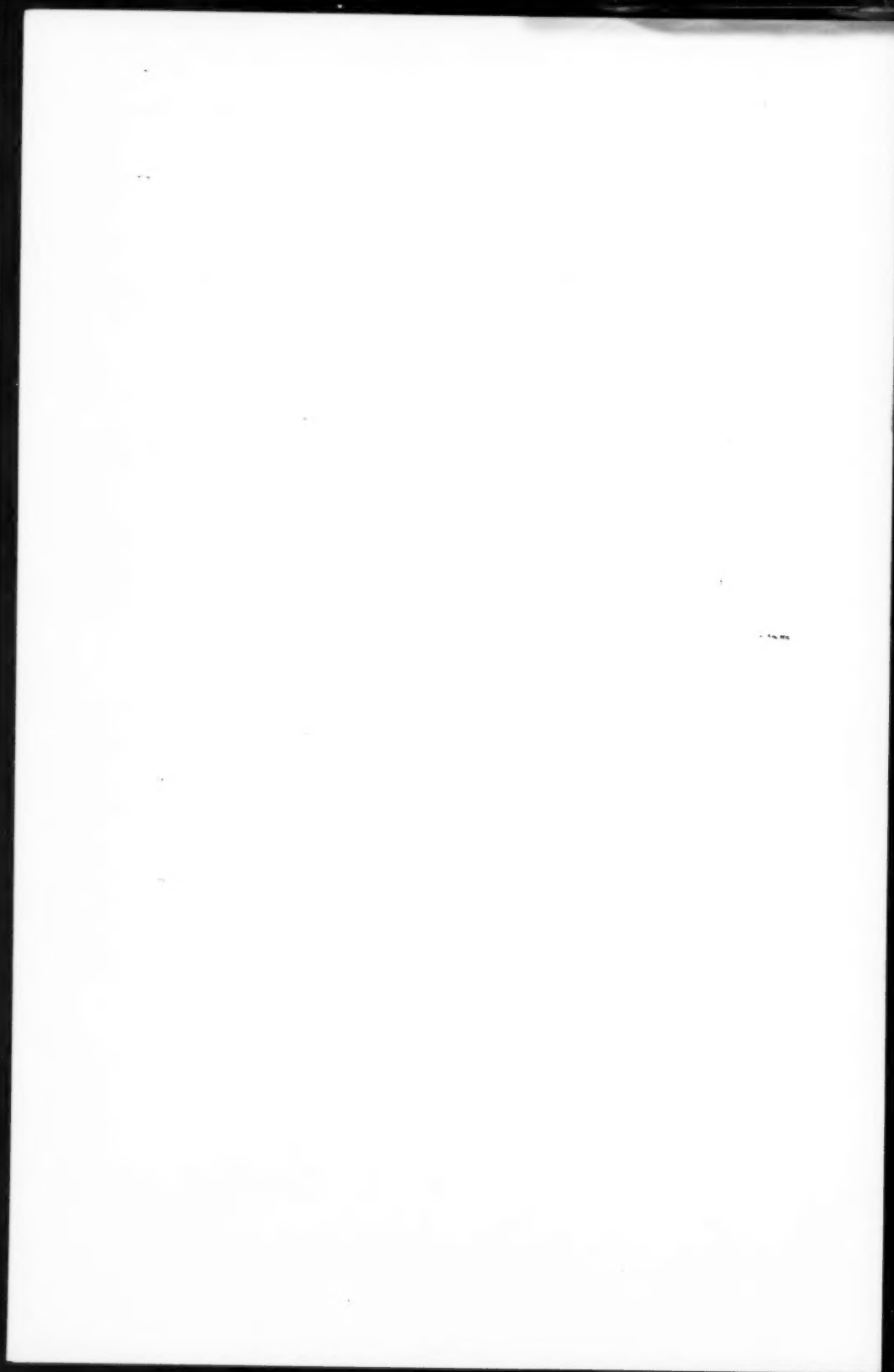
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MILBANK MEMORIAL FUND

NEW YORK

1956



MILBANK MEMORIAL FUND
1905 1955

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-SECOND
ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

THE thirty-second annual dinner meeting was held at the New York Academy of Medicine on Thursday evening December 1st, 1955. The speakers were Mr. Samuel R. Milbank, President of the Fund, Dr. Frank G. Boudreau, Executive Director, and Mr. Frederick Osborn, a member of the Fund's Board of Directors and Executive Vice-President of the Population Council, Inc.

MR. SAMUEL R. MILBANK: In behalf of the Fund's Board of Directors, I bid you a most hearty welcome to this dinner which brings to a close the Thirty-Second Annual Conference of the Milbank Memorial Fund.

I know that you have had two very busy days, and I am aware that for many of you preparations for this conference began many weeks ago, and I would like to express to you the Fund's sincere appreciation for the time and effort you have given so freely for the benefit of this conference.

I am sure that you have enjoyed the opportunity of meeting and talking with your fellow workers from many other communities and of joining with them in the adventure of exploring new ground.

Men who work under very high atmospheric pressure are obliged to pass through a decompression chamber

before returning to a normal environment. This Annual Dinner is in its way a kind of decompression chamber, to let you down gradually from the high excitement and tension of the Round Tables to the accustomed routine to which you will return tomorrow. Now that you have dined, all that is expected of you is that you enjoy at your ease the intellectual delicacies that will now be spread before you.

The fact that the Fund is fifty years old, gives me an opportunity to tell you a few things about its work. The Donor, Mrs. Elizabeth Milbank Anderson, and my father, Albert Milbank, worked closely together to guide and direct the destinies of the new foundation. About 1913 their views crystallized on a few broad principles which have been followed ever since. These were, briefly: prevention of disease, rather than treatment of its end products, constructive social measures rather than temporary alleviation of suffering, emphasis on achieving results rather than on the methods or agencies employed, treatment of causes rather than of effects and research and investigation when necessary to clear the way for practical action. Later on the need for objective appraisal of health activities and procedures became apparent, and health problems were subjected to measurement so that progress might be accurately recorded and the results in one district or county compared with those in another.

The public health demonstration proved to be a suitable means of applying these principles in action. Demonstrations have been a characteristic instrument of the Milbank Memorial Fund, in witness thereof I give you the following partial list:

In 1912, the establishment in New York City of the Home Hospital of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor to demonstrate that certain types of incipient and of arrested tuberculosis could be treated successfully in the home.

In 1920, the establishment of the Judson Health Center which demonstrated the need for many different kinds of health services, now taken for granted in poor neighborhoods.

The Public Health and Tuberculosis Demonstrations in Cattaraugus County, the City of Syracuse, and the Bellevue-Yorkville District of New York City. I think it fair to say that the influence of these demonstrations is still alive, spreading more and more widely until it has reached the farthest corners of the civilized world. For while powerful new weapons are available in the field of public health, many of the methods of using them most effectively were worked out and demonstrated clearly in these New York State communities.

Less ambitious than the public health demonstration has been the kind of social pioneering which the Fund has carried on in particular public health fields such as the eradication of diphtheria, the hygiene of housing, and the improvement of human nutrition. I am sure that you have all heard of the Fund's work in those fields. For further information I refer you to the many publications on these subjects listed in the Fund's catalogue.

The Fund's work in the field of population problems which started almost thirty years ago has been a source of great satisfaction to the Fund's Directors, Officers, and

staff. I am told that in spite of relatively modest financial support it has been of considerable influence not only here but abroad. The Office of Population Research in Princeton is its legitimate offspring, and the Office has had an important part to play in baby sitting for the infant Population Section of the United Nations.

I now come to the Fund's work in the field of mental health to which so much attention is now being given by the health and medical professions as well as the general public. It has been said that the sum total of human suffering caused by mental disorder at least equals that resulting from all the so-called physical diseases put together. Few individuals can live long in a great city without becoming acutely aware of the vast amount of human misery caused by mental disorders of various types among neighbors, friends, and acquaintances.

This subject has been one which has long been foremost in the minds of the Directors of the Fund.

The record shows that the Fund has spent nearly eight hundred thousand dollars of its income for mental health work over the years.

The first grants amounting to \$212,000 were made commencing in 1915 to the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, then in a very critical period of its organization. Some few years afterwards Dr. Thomas W. Salmon, then Medical Director of the Committee, reported that

These gifts made possible all success that has been achieved since; the influence exerted upon the treatment of mental diseases in some of the darkest places in the

United States; the striking results secured in the treatment of mental and nervous diseases among American troops in the World War and the prospects that now exist for preventive work.

This, incidentally, was the period in which Clifford Beers, encouraged and aided by the Fund, wrote his well-known book *THE MIND THAT FOUND ITSELF*.

After these initial grants the Fund took little action in the field of mental health until after World War II. We then made a contribution to the International Conference on Mental Hygiene which gave birth to the World Federation for Mental Health which we have been supporting modestly ever since. At about that time the Fund also made a grant to the National Association for Mental Health to help it over its initial hurdles. But it was in 1949 that the Fund began in earnest to develop its work in mental health with the aid of leaders in psychiatry, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and allied professions. Grants were made to help finance three projects in which attempts were made to throw light on the role of social factors in mental disorders. The first of these was the so-called Stirling County Study directed by Dr. Alexander H. Leighton of Cornell; the second, the study in the Yorkville District of New York City, directed by Dr. Thomas Rennie of the Payne Whitney Clinic, and the third in Syracuse and Onondaga County under the auspices of the New York State Mental Health Commission. These studies have now been proceeding for several years, and the first results are becoming available. They throw light on the amount and kind of mental disorder that prevails in the community: the correspond-

ence between the figures in a quiet rural district and a busy urban district is amazing. You will soon hear more of these studies as the reports issue from the press. I hope that they will help to give direction and precision to the formulation of community mental health programs.

At this opportune time, when new facts about the epidemiology of mental disorder promise to bring the era of prevention closer than before, the New York State Community Mental Health Services Act offers substantial financial help to communities which decide to take advantage of its provisions. Encouraged by these favorable factors, the Board of Directors of the Fund believes the time has come for the Fund to throw itself wholeheartedly into the campaign for better mental health through community action. The Board would like to think of doing for mental health as good a job as it was said to have done for physical health when in the 1920's it financed health demonstrations in three New York areas. I can assure you that what the Fund can do within its limitations it will do, in seeking to formulate, apply, and measure, in pilot plant fashion, the best possible mental health programs for communities of different types in this State.

The Board has given Dr. Boudreau and his associate, Dr. Gruenberg, the green light for this development, and I am sure that we can count once more on the assistance, advice, and cooperation of those leaders to whom we are already indebted for counsel and guidance.

For in all its former activities the Milbank Memorial Fund has had and still has a priceless asset, the collaboration and advice of the contemporary leaders in the several

fields of its work. I cannot list them all so I will content myself with naming a few of those who played leading parts in the work of the Fund and who have now passed away: Hermann M. Briggs, William H. Welch, Livingston Farrand, Theobald Smith, Hugh S. Cumming, and William H. Park come to mind at once. Could any one have wanted more learned and wiser advisers?

Two more names lead all the rest: Elizabeth Milbank Anderson and Albert G. Milbank. Mrs. Anderson founded the Milbank Memorial Fund in honor of her parents. Since 1921 when she died, the Fund has become a memorial to her as well as to her parents. It has been our custom at these dinners to pay tribute to the Founder and, in recent years, to couple with her name that of my father who died in 1949. For these two gave life and direction to the Fund in its early infancy, and after his cousin died my father continued to be its inspiration and guide as long as he lived. I ask you to rise and drink a silent toast to Elizabeth Milbank Anderson and Albert Goodsell Milbank.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to a man whose courageous leadership, sound judgment, and intuitive flair for selecting areas of activity which not only represent great needs, but also give promise of responding most satisfactorily to pioneering action, have guided the Fund so supremely well during the last eighteen years. Dr. Boudreau—on behalf of all of us I wish to thank you, and to express in these inadequate words our affection and our esteem. Now, having thoroughly embarrassed you, I will turn over the chairmanship of this meeting to you.

DR. FRANK G. BOUDREAU: What Mr. Milbank has said gives me the opportunity to fill in briefly a few of the high points concerning the Fund's work during the last fifty years. He has told you that the Fund was established in April 1905. From that time until 1921 Mrs. Elizabeth Milbank Anderson made gifts to the Fund from time to time and at her death in February, 1921, left it one and a half million dollars making the total of her gifts to the Fund nine and a third million dollars which was the full extent of the new foundation's endowment.

From 1905 until 1921 the Fund was operated by Albert G. Milbank, its Secretary-Treasurer, a prominent and busy lawyer who brought to it as trustees four of his intimate friends, all of them important figures in the life of New York City. In those years the Fund had no permanent staff; it was not until March, 1921, that its present Secretary, Miss Catherine A. Doran,¹ was appointed.

You must not imagine that the Fund was idle during those early years, even though its endowment was incomplete and its staff non-existent. Albert Milbank and his fellow trustees took their responsibilities seriously. Their first report is a notable document, showing expenditures amounting to \$1,544,504 for a variety of subjects, none of them trivial or wanting in significance.

Among these grants, Mr. Milbank has mentioned those to the National Committee for Mental Hygiene and to the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor for the Home Hospital, where it was shown that patients with tuberculosis could be treated successfully at home. For the rest, infant and child welfare figured largely

¹Miss Doran retired at the end of 1955.

in the budget, education here and abroad received a share, and appeals for war relief during the first World War were not disregarded. Although grants were slightly more scattered than in later years, there was an unmistakable emphasis on public health and preventive medicine.

After Mrs. Anderson's death in February, 1921, the number of trustees was increased to ten and the enlarged Board of Directors decided to launch the Fund on a full program of work. A full-time professional staff was appointed, office space rented, and scores of the leaders in medicine and public health were called in to advise the trustees on the future program. These advisers constituted what was first called Boards of Counsel, later the Advisory Council. Those of you who have participated in one of the two round tables at this thirty-second annual conference are the successors of the Boards of Counsel and the Advisory Council.

It was the Advisory Council which recommended that the Fund should finance tuberculosis and public health demonstrations, and three districts were selected: Cattaraugus County—a rural area; Syracuse—a medium sized city; and the Bellevue-Yorkville District of New York City.

Those who have studied the records of these demonstrations agree that they succeeded far beyond contemporary expectations. Their history is to be found in hundreds of technical articles and in several books.² When the League of Nations in the later 1920's held a European Rural Hygiene Conference, the model of Cattaraugus County was held out as an example, and I suspect that the present drive for full-time professional health units

²See Milbank Memorial Fund's Catalogue of Publications 1905-1955.

in counties is based at least in part on this early work. Perhaps most striking were the results in New York City for the plan of Bellevue-Yorkville was adopted for the City as a whole, and anyone who will take the trouble to look will find district health centers scattered throughout the City, each one geared to the needs of the district's population. Most notable perhaps was the plan to use the five of these health centers which are located near the City's five medical schools, for the instruction of students, for this insured better training in public health for undergraduates in medicine and brought to the health center the high standards expected of great universities. It is a matter for regret that the full promise of decentralized health administration through district health centers is still to be realized.

Soon after the demonstrations were launched it was agreed that their results could not be adequately evaluated unless there was precise knowledge of the conditions obtaining before the demonstrations began. For in the simplest terms, there was no way of knowing if tuberculosis was on the decline if accurate information was not available concerning the prevalence of tuberculosis before the demonstration started. Another useful control was to compare progress in the campaign against tuberculosis in the demonstration area with that in adjoining counties where no special measures were being taken. Fortunately these and other similar ideas brought to the Fund one of the most fertile minds in the field of health, that of Edgar Sydenstricker who was then a member of the staff of the Public Health Service but later became the Scientific Director of the Fund. He died prematurely in 1936

and I succeeded him—it is right that I should confess my debt to him and to his ideas.

In his last published report Edgar Sydenstricker insisted on the importance of housing, nutrition, and mental health as subjects of great importance to the health and welfare of our people. He envisaged their study by the Fund, and after his death when the point of no return had been reached in the demonstrations, these subjects were taken up: first housing, where fortunately an American Public Health Association Committee, under the direction of Doctor C.-E. A. Winslow, was already at work. The Fund has contributed to the support of that Committee ever since, and the Committee has to its credit a splendid list of publications for the guidance of the health officer and the community in all modern aspects of healthful housing.

Next came nutrition, which at that period (1937) was probably progressing faster than any other branch of medicine, but lagging sadly behind in its application. Medical inspection of school children for example, as far as the appraisal of nutritional status was concerned, had not made much progress since the early years of the twentieth century. Widespread dietary studies of low-income groups revealed alarming evidences of inadequacies, and medical investigations showed that specific nutritional deficiencies prevailed at a higher rate than was to be expected of a presumably well-fed people. The program of the Fund was to support research on methods of appraising nutritional status, to evaluate the various methods by large scale field trials, to cooperate financially and technically with universities and health

departments in studies of the diets and nutritional status of various population groups, and to stimulate health departments, educational authorities, medical and public health schools to give to nutrition research, practice, and teaching the recognition and organization that their importance deserved.

Because of progress in our knowledge of the relationship of nutrition to health, nutrition had become a weapon of war and an instrument of peace. The staff of the Fund was called upon to advise on both of these aspects of the subject, through membership of the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council and participation in the planning and conduct of the United Nations conferences on Food and Agriculture (Hot Springs, Virginia 1943 and Quebec 1945), UNRRA (Atlantic City 1944) and WHO (New York City 1946).

After nearly a score of years the Board of Directors of the Fund came to the conclusion that it was no longer necessary to maintain the item of nutrition in its program of work, since much progress had been made along the lines suggested by the Fund, and since other foundations (The Nutrition Foundation, Inc.; The National Vitamin Foundation, Inc. and others) had been established. The Fund shared with the Nutrition Foundation and the Williams-Waterman Fund the credit for supporting the work of a committee of the American Public Health Association which published a guide for public health administrators entitled *NUTRITION PRACTICES*, which thus becomes the official doctrine of the Association. No new grants on work in the field of nutrition are contemplated, the Fund now limiting its concern

with this subject to the analysis of data already collected, and the completion of other unfinished business. The Board of the Fund is soon expected to reach a similar decision in regard to the hygiene of housing. Foundations are often accused of making too many short term grants. Foundation Boards and executives on the other hand realize how often projects and activities and agencies are supported too long; sometimes far beyond the point of no return. When to prune or eliminate items which are no longer of vital importance, so as to save funds for new pioneering ventures is one of the foundation's most difficult decisions.

A few financial facts concerning the Fund's work in the last fifty years may be of interest to you. Starting with an endowment of approximately nine and a third million dollars, the Fund has spent nineteen and a quarter million dollars and to face the future has a balance of over eighteen million. More than seventeen and a half million has been spent for its technical program in the form of grants to outside agencies, fellowships and the work of its own technical staff. Over eighty per cent of the seventeen and a half million has been spent for projects and activities in the field of medicine and public health; nine and one-half per cent for education, eight per cent for social welfare and relief—remember the early depression years when there were few public funds for the destitute unemployed—and one and a half per cent for research. This last figure is somewhat misleading, for a high percentage of the funds listed under public health and medicine was spent for what might be called technological research.

Now as to some of the larger expenditures in the last fifty years for subjects that we in the Fund have considered important—the largest amount for one type of project was spent for the New York State public health demonstrations in Cattaraugus County, Syracuse, and the Bellevue-Yorkville District of New York City. These expenditures amounted to a total of over three million dollars over the years 1922-1935. The Community Service Society including one of its predecessor agencies, the A.I.C.P., has received approximately one and a third million dollars for projects in the public health field which partook of the nature of health demonstrations or pilot plant projects. The latest of these is the Family Health Maintenance Demonstration in the Bronx.³ Over seven hundred and twenty thousand dollars have been used to finance projects in the field of human nutrition, and over one hundred and eighty-three thousand on the work of the Committee on the Hygiene of Housing. In the field of population, the Fund has spent about four hundred and sixty-six thousand dollars of its own money and eighty-one thousand dollars of funds entrusted to it by the Carnegie Endowment and the Population Council, Inc. Mr. Milbank has reported to you on our expenditures in the field of mental health; let me remind you that they have amounted to something over seven hundred and eighty thousand dollars. In no case do these amounts represent the total expenditures on any given project, study or investigation, for foundation money is, or should be, magnetic attracting large funds

³THE FAMILY HEALTH MAINTENANCE DEMONSTRATION. A CONTROLLED, LONG TERM INVESTIGATION OF FAMILY HEALTH. Proceedings of a Round Table of the 1953 Annual Conference of the Milbank Memorial Fund, 1954. 229 pages.

from other sources. I must pay tribute here to the generosity of the Carnegie Corporation and the Population Council for entrusting the Fund with the administration of their generous grants.

I turn now with relief to the future. What does it hold for us, and how shall we plan for it?

I believe that the Fund should be able to operate successfully in the future as in the past by adherence to the principles advocated after extensive personal experience by Mrs. Anderson and Albert Milbank. To these I would add an observation of the late Dr. Keppel, that foundations which always strive for home runs too often strike out, and that a walk, a sacrifice fly, or a one base hit often advance the cause more surely and safely. Timeliness is another important factor, particularly for one of the smaller foundations, which may exhaust its resources in seeking to advance a cause which is not ripe for action. Mental health is a good example, for many millions of dollars were poured into its promotion before much of the ground work for the prevention of mental disorders had been laid down. Now that we have an aroused citizenry, the rich fruits of research resulting from many well-planned field studies and sound legislation supported by a system of grants-in-aid which will stimulate matching funds, I am convinced the time is ripe for foundation support of the demonstration or pilot plant project in mental health which Mr. Milbank has described. That at any rate is the goal towards which Dr. Gruenberg and I are working, with the cooperation and advice of the officers, directors, technical staff, and advisers of the Fund. We hope to describe to you and

your successors at future conferences several such demonstrations or pilot plant projects in New York State communities of different types and sizes. It has been my observation that the interest and excitement of this kind of social pioneering brings new life to the agencies undertaking it, and I believe that the more widely this interest is shared the more beneficial are its results.

Turning now to the field of population problems, I find myself less inclined to talk glibly about the future because so many brilliant minds have explored and described the many possible ramifications. In the late 1920's and 1930's the Fund concentrated its studies on differential fertility; you will find in the Fund's catalogue of publications many titles on this subject, most of them from the pen of my associate, Dr. Clyde V. Kiser, and his group. Later, a field study of the social and psychological factors affecting human fertility was carried on by a committee acting under the auspices of the Fund, and financed in large part by the Carnegie Endowment of New York. Known as the Indianapolis Study; its findings are recorded in four volumes; a fifth will have a summary chapter. The finding that has attracted the most attention is that in families that were completely planned with respect to both number and spacing of children, the size of the family increased rather than decreased with income, occupational rank, and educational attainment whereas the reverse is the usual pattern.

It was also found that fertility was directly related to the strength of the feeling of economic security among completely planned families.

Since the fall of 1953 the Fund has been sponsoring

the work of a steering committee which is formulating plans for a new study of the social and psychological factors affecting fertility, based in part upon the experience in Indianapolis. It will be partly longitudinal instead of *ex post facto*, and instead of restricting the study to one city, it will be representative of white couples of similar fertility in a large segment of the urban population. These field studies have an important by-product for in addition to the value of their technical results, they provide opportunities for training social scientists. This country is fortunate in possessing a relatively large supply of these people; I say this in spite of the scorn with which they are too often regarded by the ignorant and the prejudiced. The lack of engineers is rightly viewed with alarm by those responsible for our defense, but no one seems to have given much thought to our lack of social scientists when the gravest national and world problems are due primarily to aberrations in human behavior for which we must find causes and remedies.

Much is being done to throw light on population problems by other foundations and groups. The newest foundation in this field is the Population Council, Inc., presided over by Mr. John D. Rockefeller III and directed wisely and imaginatively by our speaker of the evening, General Fred Osborn. Among its many activities the Council emphasizes the importance of training demographers in the employ of governments whose populations press increasingly heavily on the country's resources. While many of the underdeveloped countries face a mounting crisis in this respect and have much to learn from Western experience, I believe that their first

step must be to survey their own situation and have all the facts brought before them by their own people and their own agencies. The Council is helping to make this possible and more and more qualified demographers are becoming available.

How far the conclusions reached by our committee in its study of the social and psychological factors affecting human fertility may be applicable to different cultures and peoples is a question I cannot answer. It may be that it will become necessary to identify and appraise the factors which influence human fertility in every large population group. I am sure that much work of this kind will be done in the future, and that it will be guided to some extent by the experience of the studies to which I have referred.

I do not have the time to more than mention a few other branches of the Fund's work which are going on routinely, such as our modest fellowship program, the analysis of a vast amount of data on dental caries and on nutrition in pregnancy, preparation of papers on chronic disease based on field studies, appraisal of health activities, etc. This conference itself illustrates one type of the Fund's work. It may surprise you to learn that the proceedings of these conferences have reached into nearly all countries; the World Federation for Mental Health has distributed those on Mental Health to all of its branches and members and many hundreds of copies have been supplied to WHO on request.

If we of the Milbank Memorial Fund face the future with pleasurable anticipation and some confidence, it is because the prospect of new types of social pioneering

in mental health and population problems is alluring, and experience has taught us that the best qualified men and women are eager to work with us unselfishly for the welfare of mankind. We look forward to sharing with you and others of your kind the excitement, difficulties and triumphs of this high type of endeavor.

It is now my pleasant duty to introduce to you the speaker of the evening. If I were to mention all the appointments he has held and all the honors that have come to him, I would be encroaching seriously on his time. So I must content myself with mentioning a few of his appointments, honors, and accomplishments.

In the first place he was a banker and corporation executive who spent much of his life in the performance of good works. During the second World War he became a Major-General in the Army with the peaceful duty of taking charge of the education of our soldiers. After the War he became Deputy Representative of the United States on the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. He is a trustee of the Carnegie Corporation and the Milbank Memorial Fund, President of the Eugenics Society, a Director of the Population Association of America, Executive Vice-President of the Population Council Inc., and author, with Frank Lorimer, of the book *DYNAMICS OF POPULATION*.

I think of him as a promoter of significant studies in the broad field of population problems, a major source of encouragement and inspiration, and an almost inexhaustible source of scholarly ideas.

General Fred Osborn!!

SIGNPOSTS FOR FOUNDATION SURVIVAL

FREDERICK OSBORN

THE Milbank Fund is this year celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. Its record of accomplishment is the best possible tribute to Mrs. Anderson who founded it, to Mr. Albert Milbank who carried forward her work, and to the staff and able officers who have administered the Fund with such wisdom and discretion. Other foundations have been run by able and dedicated people, but none perhaps with more success. It may be worthwhile therefore to examine the work of the Fund over the past fifty years, to consider the policies it has developed and see whether they are applicable to the operation of other foundations today.

The Milbank Fund lends itself particularly to such an examination. It is small enough that its entire activity can be put on a single canvas. Its founder, officers, staff, and most of its trustees have been much above the average in ability and dedication. It was started when the number of American foundations could be counted on the fingers of two hands if you went around twice, and it survives much admired today when there are several thousand foundations and even the best are under attack. What policies were developed, what standards set, which may account for its success?

The interest of the Founder was broadly charitable, as was usual in those days, but it was far more focussed than most, and it centered around a hard core of work in public health. The Fund had a sense of direction

from the start. When during the early years it wandered from this course, it always came back to it, and by 1923 more than seventy-five per cent of its income was being spent on public health. Over the years it has learned how to handle itself in this field. Officers, staff, and trustees have become acquainted with public health problems, with public health personnel, the Director of the Fund has been picked for his acknowledged leadership in public health work. The Fund has therefore had the benefit of experienced, and in the case of its Director, professional guidance. I would submit that the more a foundation spreads itself over a great number of fields, the more its giving is the giving of amateurs. No amount of wisdom and good intent can make up for the lack of specific experience and particular knowledge.

In the matter of timing the Fund was particularly fortunate in its choice of public health. Medical discoveries were being rapidly developed, waiting to be given practical application. The tide was setting for social improvement of all sorts. There were unparalleled opportunities for the work of a foundation which would demonstrate the first practical applications, and turn them over to a waiting public. It was because the times were ripe for public health that the Milbank Fund with its relatively slender resources was able to advance the application of medical knowledge by so many years. If it had started in this field fifty years earlier there would have been few guide posts to go by, and who can say that it would have had the wisdom to subsidize the studies of a Koch or a Pasteur.

The first lesson then is that a foundation should oper-

ate in a particular field and that the field should be one which is ready to be exploited.

Within the field of public health the Fund made a wise choice of areas of concentration. Through gifts to the A.I.C.P. it initiated school lunches for children, research on children's diet, dental studies, and a campaign for the correction of defective vision. Through its initial gift, along with that of Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, to the National Committee on Mental Hygiene, it applied a leverage which in the words of Dr. Thomas Salmon "started everything." There were other choices which were not so good, and courage and judgment were required to cut them off. Here continued experience in a single field has had a cumulative value; the proportion of good choices over poor has risen with the years. It is also interesting to note that there has been a continuing tendency to support fewer enterprises, and give them larger and longer support. The Fund acts as promoter or initiator in enlarging the scope of public health activities. It recognizes that, in the words of one of its reports, "the use of public funds is limited to work which the public understands and is willing to support." To reach this point the public may require a very considerable process of education, for which demonstrations in the field are the most effective vehicles.

The Fund's demonstrations in public health which commenced in 1923 were on a large scale and lasted for ten years. They covered one rural, one urban, and one metropolitan area. The demonstration in Cattaraugus County paved the way for full-time suitably qualified health commissioners with nuclear staff in county health

departments; the demonstration in Syracuse showed what could be done in disease prevention with the resources available in cities of medium size; and the New York City health demonstration led the way to decentralization of health activities, the establishment of district health centers and the close relationship of certain health centers with five medical schools in the City. Perhaps the most important demonstration of all was to show how a foundation's well-conceived operation could bridge the gap between knowledge which was not being applied, and the acceptance by public authorities of the responsibility for its application. Do other foundations have this in mind in their promotions?

While the Milbank Fund was demonstrating new possibilities in public health, a new school of scientists were beginning to apply quantitative statistical methods to medicine and to social problems. With this new tool the foundation executive would be able to acquire a set of previously unattainable facts to help him in making his decisions. The trustees of the Fund were quick to grasp the implications of this development. Edgar Sydenstricker, a medical statistician, was brought in to head the Fund's new Division of Research. Before long he became the Fund's Executive Director. From that time on, quantitative objective research, the method of the new social sciences, was to accompany and help direct the decisions of the Fund in its chosen field.

To be properly understood and properly used, statistical research requires experience and professional skills. Increasingly the Fund made them available within its own staff. Research and other more extensive activities

of the staff brought up the Fund's administrative expenses from one per cent of annual income in 1920 to seventeen per cent in 1929 and to thirty per cent by 1954. For a grant giving foundation, the expenditure of such a large proportion of its funds in its own office was a considerable departure from usual practice.

Research by its own staff led almost inevitably to publication. A Division of Publication was set up in 1928. The Fund's *Quarterly*, launched in 1923, was supplemented by a steady flow of books and technical papers. Today the Fund's catalogue contains almost a thousand titles for which the Fund has been responsible in whole or in part. Some twenty thousand copies of publications are distributed annually at modest prices and sometimes, as in Europe, without charge. Personally I like to think of publication as a vital by-product of a foundation's work, particularly of its work in research. When a foundation is the source of research, publication becomes inevitable; and valuable in proportion to the quality of the research.

In the First Annual Report of the Fund's Division of Research, published in 1928, Sydenstricker wrote: "If human populations are to be used, as in fact they are used, as laboratories for experiments in public health administration, the basic procedures of scientific experimentation ought to be employed in order to lessen the frequency of failure and prevent waste of effort. The establishment of a Division of Research in this field, therefore, is a further recognition of the possibility of including social data in the domain of scientific inquiry."

This statement on research was made almost thirty

years ago. It refers to public health, but is equally applicable to other fields of social advance. It bears repetition today, when many foundations are still planning their work without reference to whole areas of facts which would be available only through social research, and still conducting demonstrations with only the haziest idea of the results they are getting.

By the time of the Second Annual Report on Research, published in 1929, the Fund was engaged on specific problems relating to the accuracy of public health statistics and the results of its demonstrations, but it had also entered the more general and basic field of population studies. The approach was of course from the point of view of public health. In his report Sydenstricker made the following statement: "Obviously if preventive medicine and public health activities are successful in prolonging life, they must be taken into account as factors which determine the physical and mental composition of the population. Conversely, if public health activities, as well as other efforts toward social amelioration, are to be guided intelligently, it is highly desirable to have some knowledge of the changes in the rate at which various social groups reproduce themselves, of changes in the extent to which specific social groups are recruited from the others, and of the general constitutional or physical characteristics of these groups."

There was thus a broad philosophy behind the Fund's interest in population studies, and a clear hope that the field of public health could be enlarged to take in not only the prevention of disease, but the physical and mental composition of the population. Today, almost thirty

years later, neither the philosophy nor the hope finds expression in the utterances of public health authorities. Public health is not yet concerned with differences in the reproductive rates of people living at different levels of mental or physical well being, although it is constantly teaching that we must improve childhood environments. Nor is public health yet interested in differences in reproduction which, from one generation to another, for better or worse, affect the incidence of genes relating to the health and longevity of the population.

Today there is an increasing proportion of deaths from impairments known to have a genetic base; an increasing proportion of people incapacitated for a normal life by deficiencies of genetic origin, and an increasing danger of a high rate of mutation due to increased radiation. All these things are soon going to force public health to enlarge its field. But this is after a thirty year lapse of time. The lesson for a foundation might well be not to engage in research in a field which is not ripe for ameliorative action.

For myself I cannot take the view that the Fund moved into the field of population research too soon. The Fund's backing of this field advanced the study of population by almost a generation. The experience, the new methodologies, the cumulative background of available factual material, the competent personnel, the places where competent personnel can be trained, to an extent greater than any of us realize or would like to admit, owe their existence to the initiative of the Milbank Fund which began a generation ago. Now when over half the world is pressing desperately against its too meager resources,

and when in many areas people are increasing in numbers faster than they can increase their productivity, when foreign governments are asking for help in training, in research, in texts on the subject of population, we can hardly regret that we are able at least in part to meet their needs. In much of the world, public health measures are the primary cause of very rapid increases in population growth, and this growth in turn reacts on the application of public health measures. The relation between public health and population growth is more obvious than it was thirty years ago.

Looking back over the past fifty years of the Fund, it would seem that the first twenty-five years were a period of learning, step by step, the formula for the operation of a successful foundation. The second twenty-five years have seen this formula improved, and carried out with most unusual success. Throughout the whole period of evolving experience the Milbank Fund has been directed by men extraordinarily well qualified to lay down the course a foundation should follow.

What then is the lesson provided us by the history of the Milbank Fund during its first fifty years?

The most evident lesson is that a foundation should have a central core of interest in which its trustees can become experienced and its staff be professionals. Any other form of giving will tend to have an amateurish quality.

Second, the field of a foundation's interest should be ripe for exploitation. This means that the climate of public opinion should not be too unfavorable. There will also be advantages, if it is a field in which there are

new scientific developments ready to be carried forward into practical application; or, in the words of the 1930 report (page 34), that there is sufficient "fundamental scientific data on which future action may be soundly based."

I think it has been sufficiently demonstrated that the greatest recent contributions to human well being have had a considerable base in scientific developments. Today when these developments are increasingly cumulative in their nature, no foundation, no matter how large, need lack opportunities for work in fields where scientific information is available. It seems to me that it is here, rather than in promoting new ideas derived solely from the best judgments of even the wisest men, that the foundations can make their greatest contributions. Even here, good judgment will be a vital factor, for we will never have enough facts to give an entire picture. But while we know little at present about man and his social behavior, we do have scientific methodologies capable of teaching us and of checking on man's behavior under different conditions. When the tools of science are available, foundations should use them before engaging themselves to change the social order.

Having entered a specific field, in which objective knowledge is available for its sound exploitation, how should a foundation operate?

It should start with a staff who are professionals in the chosen field. It should prepare itself to conduct research in the chosen field with its own staff, so that its work may be properly grounded and so that it may check on the results it is getting. We may note here that

the Milbank Fund did not follow this order. Its work was well under way before it undertook objective research to find out if it was soundly based. But the methods of social research were not available to it in 1905. It took advantage of them at an early date.

With a staff doing research, there will be publication of the staff's work, at first in outside journals, later perhaps in a foundation periodical. With good research going on, publication of some sort becomes imperative, if only for the benefit of other scientists. Without research, publication may add to the world of literature, or be used to defend the work of the foundation, but is no longer a duty. However publication without research is one of the pleasantest of foundation activities, and frequently indulged in.

With an organization along these general lines, the foundation will begin to tackle its objectives with considerable confidence. If it follows the experience of the Milbank Fund, it will work through a series of demonstrations, which will be continued, if successful, until they are so understood and accepted by the public that public authority or other organizations take them over.

Few foundations want to continue supporting a project indefinitely. If they do they will fail in their special function which is to act as innovators, bridging the gap between new scientific knowledge or the new needs of a special situation, and the public acceptance which will lead competent authority to take over in a new field. We are not of course speaking here of those foundations engaged in stimulating pure research, nor of those which give to accepted charities. The oldest form of

giving still has its place alongside the newest. We recognize too that many foundations will operate in fields in which objective experimental knowledge is neither available nor applicable. But in these cases it will be harder for them to defend their work against criticism, than for those foundations whose accomplishment can be measured by objective standards.

Perhaps what I am trying to say can be summarized in a few words. The Milbank Fund has had an experience of fifty years in the foundation business under a series of extremely able people: the Founder, Mrs. Anderson; the chairman for many years, Mr. Albert Milbank; Edgar Sydenstricker, Frank Boudreau, and the present chairman, Mr. Samuel Milbank. In proportion to its size it has, in my opinion, done more to accelerate the improvement of life in the United States than any other group. It has done so without controversy other than that which surrounds any innovation. Its work has aroused no criticism of foundations nor is it likely to in the future. It has set an example others might well follow.

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